



Early Journal Content on JSTOR, Free to Anyone in the World

This article is one of nearly 500,000 scholarly works digitized and made freely available to everyone in the world by JSTOR.

Known as the Early Journal Content, this set of works include research articles, news, letters, and other writings published in more than 200 of the oldest leading academic journals. The works date from the mid-seventeenth to the early twentieth centuries.

We encourage people to read and share the Early Journal Content openly and to tell others that this resource exists. People may post this content online or redistribute in any way for non-commercial purposes.

Read more about Early Journal Content at <http://about.jstor.org/participate-jstor/individuals/early-journal-content>.

JSTOR is a digital library of academic journals, books, and primary source objects. JSTOR helps people discover, use, and build upon a wide range of content through a powerful research and teaching platform, and preserves this content for future generations. JSTOR is part of ITHAKA, a not-for-profit organization that also includes Ithaka S+R and Portico. For more information about JSTOR, please contact support@jstor.org.

The Correspondence of Nicholas Biddle dealing with National Affairs, 1807-1844. Edited by REGINALD C. McGRANE, Ph.D., Assistant Professor of History in the University of Cincinnati. (Boston and New York: Houghton Mifflin Company. 1919. Pp. xxix, 366. \$6.00.)

THE mass of papers out of which Mr. McGrane has taken the material in his modest volume exists in the Library of Congress in 113 folio volumes, besides Biddle's letter-books in six volumes, and in a collection of private papers of uncertain quantity which still exists in the hands of the Biddle family. Under such conditions the task of selection is difficult. Whatever is taken, much must be left that would be interesting to the general reader. The reader must not expect too much from the title. Professor Catterall's *Second Bank of the United States* contains as many words on the bank under Biddle as Mr. McGrane gives us during the same period in Biddle's correspondence; and through the fact that Catterall is taking only the essential things in the correspondence we get from him a larger amount of Biddle himself on the bank. For example, Mr. McGrane did not find space to include Biddle's plan submitted to Jackson in 1829 for paying off the public debt if the bank were rechartered, which Catterall presents in a digested form in a well-filled page. As a presentation of the events of Jackson's administration the selection of letters is necessarily inadequate.

In another sense, however, it is extremely interesting and valuable. It presents the reader who knows his American history a fair view of Biddle the man, and shows him in his relation with some of the chief events of the time. The controversy through which he lived obscured his personality. He was not as bad as his enemies said nor as good as Jackson's opponents thought. He was a man of excellent mental capacity, devoted to the one institution with which he was connected, courageous in battle, never despairing, and possessed of the power to make others do as he wished. "We should have done badly without him", said Webster, referring to the struggle to pass the charter through Congress in 1832. "His address and ability in satisfying the doubts of his friends, softening the opposition of enemies, and explaining whatever needed explanation have been an important cause in producing the result which has, so far, attended the Bill" (p. 193). He was, also, a man of broad culture, and a genial and pleasant companion. Few American men of business have been more admirable in social and cultural relations.

On the other hand, Nicholas Biddle did not differ from the average man in his ideas of political conduct. He did not believe that the bank should consider the politics of the prospective appointees when naming the directors; but he was hardly embarked on his campaign for a new charter when he began to appoint Jackson men in several branches. He did not understand Andrew Jackson, assuming continually that he could

flatter an illiterate old man into complaisance. Like many another man who sat high on society's pyramid, he forgot that a man is not necessarily unintelligent because of being uneducated. He never understood democratic government, assuming that he could educate it by means of pamphlets and newspapers after it was already fully embarked in a controversy. He finally lost full self-control, and when the bank was denied a charter stopped making loans with the deliberate purpose of forcing the Jackson men to yield to the bank. "Our only safety", he said, January 27, 1834, "is in pursuing a steady course of firm restriction—and I have no doubt that such a course will ultimately lead to restoration of the currency and the recharter of the Bank" (p. 219). Jackson has often been condemned because he was taken in by Samuel Swartwout of New York; but Mr. McGrane's book shows that Biddle was equally deceived (pp. 213, 217). There is much to show that Biddle was overconfident of his ability to utilize other men for his own interest while thinking they could not see his design. As an illustration of this trait we have his fancy in May, 1838, that he could get Van Buren to relinquish his hostility to the bank and in fact restore the deposits without giving it a federal charter. The scheme was laid before Poinsett in three letters, and the outline of the plan was revealed in one of them (pp. 273-276). He was bitterly opposed to the subtreasury, which he called "the newest and therefore the favorite foolery", and he boasted that it was his opposition that defeated the bill in 1838. In many ways we get from Mr. McGrane's book most interesting glimpses of Biddle the unpractical and rash politician; for after 1833 he was without disguise a participant in the political contests of the day. For the purpose here indicated, of giving the reader a vivid and informing view of the leading characteristics of this interesting man, with some new light on his relations to the history of the day, this volume of correspondence is very successful; but the student who looks deeply into the subject will have to consult the original papers. Mr. McGrane's well-selected volume, however, lacks an adequate topical index, and sometimes the notes do not explain the subjects to which the letters refer as fully as the intelligent reader has a right to expect.

The Sequel of Appomattox: a Chronicle of the Reunion of the States. By WALTER LYNWOOD FLEMING. [Chronicles of America series, vol. XXXII.] (New Haven: Yale University Press. 1919. Pp. ix, 322.)

The Cleveland Era: a Chronicle of the New Order in Politics. By HENRY JONES FORD. [*Id.*, vol. XLIV.] (*Ibid.* 1919. Pp. ix, 232.)